

Chapter 53

Evaluation of Mobile Learning with The Eight-Dimensional E-Learning Framework

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ABSTRACT

Mobile learning has been a very popular topic in recent years as a result of the accelerating use of mobile devices. This learning type that offers education for everyone without any space and time limitation opens the doors for life-long learning. Even though mobile learning, which is employed to support the traditional education and ensure distant education, seems to have many advantages, it also possesses some disadvantages. Therefore, evaluating mobile learning in various dimensions will contribute to the literature through revealing the antecedents of these advantages and disadvantages. In this chapter, Khan's (2005) eight-dimensional e-learning framework is explained with its dimensions and adapted into mobile learning context. Subsequently, Coursera case which is among the MOOCs that are commonly used nowadays as a mobile interface is evaluated with reference to the framework.

INTRODUCTION

Small mobile communications devices are currently used for a variety of purposes in our daily lives and play a significant role in accessing information, for interaction, and even conducting learning activities. Sharples (2000) reported that the use of these mobile devices in learning activities has led to e-Learning (that typically uses desktop computers or portable laptops with large screens) developing into truly mobile learning. Similarly, Quinn (2000) named e-Learning, which can be achieved through movable operational tools, as mobile learning. According to Gulbahar's (2012) definition, mobile learning refers to ensuring education and teaching through small mobile devices such as PDAs, smart phones, movable media players, tablets, and mobile phones.

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Mobile learning allows access to educational information and activities using small, mobile devices at any place and time (Roger, 2011) and brings many advantages to users. Attewell (2005) summarized these advantages as follows: They help students to develop their reading, writing, and computational skills; realize their own abilities; determine the areas requiring help and support; improve their self-confidence and self-respect; and acquire independent and collaborative learning experiences. In addition, Woodill (2011) emphasized that mobile learning has some benefits such as ensuring the long-time focus of learner, being both efficient and effective, saving time and costs, allowing the opportunity to update information dynamically, being personal, and permitting the access to information through various resources.

By means of these advantages provided by mobile technology, learning will acquire a new dimension in the future. Ally (2014) argues that there are some trends that educators and policy makers should be aware of. These trends are as follows:

- The role of instructor turns into that of a facilitator of learning from a presenter of information.
- Learning takes place at any time of the day and in any place.
- Students can reach learning materials at any time and from any place through electronic repositories.
- There will be no geographic barriers which can prevent access to learning materials through the Internet.
- Students and teachers will be able to access learning materials as open educational resources under Creative Commons licences.
- Learning will not be teacher-centered, but rather learner-centered.
- More multimedia materials will be used to meet the needs of current and upcoming generations of learners.
- Learning systems will be intelligent and will be able to follow the learners' development.

Nowadays, most people carry their mobile devices, such as smart phones, laptop computers or tablets, with them constantly for entertainment, communication, work, and education related purposes. These devices that we encounter at almost every moment in our lives, have undoubtedly a significant role in an educational sense and there are some important points about these devices in the learning materials' development process. Sharples (2000) summarized these points as follows:

- **Portable:** It should be accessible at any moment and in any place when and where the user needs.
- **Personal:** It should be suitable for the skills and learning styles of learners and should support personal learning.
- **Unobtrusive:** The design of mobile learning screens should be clear and simple rather than ornate and complex.
- **Accessible:** The communication between learners, experts, and students should be facilitated.
- **Adaptable:** It should be adaptable for individual skills and the development of information.
- **Permanent:** It should be both permanent and continuous against the potential changes in technology.
- **Practical:** It should be suitable for daily activities such as communication, work, and learning.

There are some rules to be considered while designing applications to be used in mobile devices. These rules were highlighted by Madeira et al., (2009) as follows:

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